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Department of State

TELEGRAM

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INDICATE:

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TAGS: PFOR, MASS, PK, US

SUBJECT: U.S. MILITARY SUPPLY POLICY TOWARD PAKISTAN

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1. Have made an effort in the past week or so to try to understand, in a military way at least, just what the Paks are talking about on the question of additional military equipment from the United States. With such info as we have here from Defense Attache and Defense Rep have attempted to get educated on what Paks now have, on how this compares in numbers and in sophistication with what India and Afghanistan have, and lastly, on what the Paks really want. Our information may not be

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completely up to date but probably quite good enough for the purpose of this review. There follows herein certain conclusions and observations from this study. It will contain no surprises for planners in the Pentagon, and certainly will not be as complete as they could produce. Am sending these thoughts along partially because I am not certain how recently our people in Washington and in adjacent countries have taken a look at the practical side of the problem. Obviously this is an in-house study and we have not talked to the Paks about it.

2. The phrase "additional military equipment" can in itself be misleading. As far as numbers are concerned, Pakistan would seem to have all the hardware they need, particularly considering their urgent economic and developmental needs. There are some exceptions to this general conclusion, which will be mentioned later on in this message.

3. The problem is rather, and again partially with these same exceptions, a question of the level of sophistication of weapons and other military equipment.

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4. There is no way to generalize on this type of problem, so will address briefly below the major categories of equipment.

a. Tanks: At first glance at figures of stocks on hand the Paks would seem to be in a surprisingly good position vis-a-vis their neighbors. Upon closer look, however, it is easy to understand the concern of the Pak military on this score. About half of their medium tanks are Chinese, which are quite inferior to the Soviet T-55's of India and Afghanistan (not to mention the T-62). The Chinese T-59 is manual shift, has no vertical stabilizer system, and must be stopped to be fired. Pakistan is also concerned by the high density of more modern night-sighting devices on their neighbors armor. An additional factor, not reflected by the overall numbers is the 345 Pak tanks with a 75/76 mm main gun. These can in no way compare with the 100 and 105 mm guns on Indian and Afghan tanks. The Pakistan Army wants to upgrade the M47/48 tanks by retro-fitting them with diesel, upgunning to the 105 mm tube, and adding IR capability. (In my first substantive talk with Bhutto, he asked me to see if we could be

helpful in modernizing our tanks here, saying that he understood we were doing this in Iran. I did not report this at the time as I wanted first to find out the history of the problem here, and also to make this overall study. Will report as fully as we can from here on the magnitude and other aspects of such a requested effort on our part as soon as I can.)

b. Artillery: Again the numbers are not a good measure of the comparative quality and future capability. Pak artillery is mostly from PRC. The guns are gladly accepted by the Paks because there they have no other source but the guns are generally considered inferior to the Soviet or U.S. counterpart. An additional deficiency is the inferior fuzing and limited variety of ammunition provided by the Chinese. Indian ability to manufacture artillery has a psychological and material effect on the Pak/Indian balance. Pakistan is especially concerned because even re-tubing an old gun depends upon foreign military assistance. As an example of this concern, I am told that some of the present tubes are so worn that the Paks feel they can no longer afford to use them for target practice which would wear

them further.

c. Fighter Aircraft: Quantitatively the Indian Air Force appears to have a two-to-one ratio over Pakistan Air Force and the Paks in turn maintain approximately that same ratio over the Afghan Air Force. The latest information we have on the Indian MIG-21 is that India has an inventory of 200. I wonder if that isn't somewhat deflated in view of the Indian production capability. Quality-wise I suspect that the Indian Air Force is well ahead of the Pak Air Force due to their MIG-21 and 2000 plus pilots. Estimates on the F-6 (MIG-19) inventory in the PAF range from 120 to 145 with probably 45 maintained in a flyable storage. There is no doubt that the Mirage III and V are first line aircraft but with only 42 to 44 in the PAF inventory they are not a major factor. The estimate on the PAF F-86/Sabre inventory varies up to 135, although it is unlikely that over 75 are currently maintained in flyable condition. The capability of this 20 plus year old aircraft cannot be counted on to any great extent. On the Afghan Air Force side I don't see much of

a match and one must question their pilot capability after reviewing the message traffic on the Air Force problems over the past six months.

d. Bombers: The bomber forces of the three countries are not formidable factors, but again it is India over Pakistan by about two-to-one ratio. Only question arises here is PRC intentions regarding Pak employment of the TU-16 (Badger). Understand that PAF flight and maintenance crews have trained in PRC over last 18 months.

e. Air Transport: Herein lies the first major exception to the rule that the Paks seem to have sufficient equipment in a numerical sense, but that it is either obsolete or inferior. The Paks really don't have any, at least not beyond some logistical lift in emergency, but certainly not sufficient to give them any ability in air deployment of troops. This is a really decided disadvantage in view of the India capability with over 200 transport aircraft and in excess of 100 transport helicopters. On occasion the Paks will have six C-130's in-commission and 4 to 5 of their 9 MI-8 transport helicopters operational.

Even the Afghans can out-transport the Paks.

f. Air Defense: Herewith is the second exception to the rule. Pakistan has no surface-to-air missiles at all, in contrast to both India and Afghanistan. This disadvantage is psychologically hard to take in addition to its practical aspects.

g. Navy: The Indian navy has a decided naval advantage which also includes exceptions to the rule. Of major surface units the Indians have an operational aircraft carrier with a naval air arm, eight Soviet built OSA-class large guided missile patrol boats (PTFG) and five landing ships (LST/LSM); the Paks have none. In destroyers/escorts/frigates; India has 29, Pakistan has 5. Of the Indian total, six are modern Leander-class frigates built in Bombay while Paks have inferior, obsolete British built units. The Paks are virtually defenseless against the Indian OSA-class boat with its SS-N-2 STYX missiles. The capability of these boats was amply demonstrated during the 1971 war when Pak ships and oil storage area at Karachi harbor were severely hit. The Pak Navy wants modern weapons (missiles and guns) and electronics

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systems to equip ships and aircraft so as to provide protection for their only strategic harbor, Karachi, where the naval base, fuel facilities, and major industrial facilities are located; as well as to provide some protection for the near-by supply lines.

5. If I were Chief of Staff here, and charged with the necessity for a creditable defense capability, I would (a) try to get the U.S. (as we are the only ones who could do it) to retrofit our M-47 and M-48 tanks and retube to 105 MM since they would be no match at all now with the tanks of neighbors. I might even try to retrofit and upgrade the old Shermans, in view of the expense of new tanks. I would then drop some of the Chinese tanks out of inventory, reduce personnel, and have a much better even though smaller fleet, (b) try to obtain modern fighters (perhaps a lesser number) and phase the F-86's out, (c) want sufficient modern air transport to give some mobility of forces, (d) want at least a modest modern air defense of ~~XX~~ our only port at Karachi, with its vital logistical complex impunity, and (e) want some of the things mentioned in 4, g for the Navy, knowing that I

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could never get enough to match the Indians, but enough to force caution on the part of hostile craft in coming close enough to allow our largest city and only port to be within the range of their weapons.

6. If I were Prime Minister here, I would of course want the very same things for a creditable defense posture, to the extent my country could afford it, and to the extent I can get foreign help, hopefully from the United States because our military likes U.S. hardware better, and as that would show U.S. support and backing. I would know that trying to reach parity with India would be folly in view of the disparity in size and strength of the two countries. I would, therefore, be primarily interested in developing defensive forces of sufficient sophistication to be a factor to be reasoned with, as I tried to accomplish the Simla objectives and then try to move beyond that in other steps to improve relations with India, and hopefully with Afghanistan. (I would, of course, be watchful as regards Indian intentions, and the extent of Soviet support there, continually weighing what might be the state of affairs in India in some years)

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to come, perhaps after Indira. And always with an eye on Afghanistan, and Soviet moves there. If it should become apparent that the Soviets intend to put massive equipment behind Daud, something would just have to give.) I would, however, be willing to keep military expenditures down close to a risky minimum in the process of watching our neighbors and trying to improve relations with them, in order to devote all possible attention to national development and to the betterment of the livelihood of my people, both for the good that that would do, and the fact that this would seem to be the surest way for me to ~~XXXX~~ remain in power in a parliamentary democracy. But then, as Prime Minister, I would also have to weigh how much I need the support of the military to hold political power. I would have to keep the stated needs of the military well in mind for if I let their strength go below levels they thought really necessary, I just might not be around anymore as Prime Minister to make all these decisions. On the other hand, by keeping them reasonably confident that in my civil rule I am taking those steps that I reasonably can in the interest of the basic security of our country, we would together

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hopefully, gradually build up a lasting tradition of the military being subservient to civil authority.

7. But, I am of course neither of these gentlemen, but just a new Ambassador trying to take a good look at where things stand as of now. An interesting side-light developed out of this study. There seemed to be a general consensus that, within some finite and not very long period, we are going to be out of business as far as our past relations with the Pak military are concerned. Our equipment, even now obsolete, will further deteriorate to the point where we will not be very important here on the security side. The Attaches already see this trend and that leaves me rather sad, not only because of an awareness of past relationships, but also because of the basic importance of the military in this country. In judging this we must bear in mind that we have (with the one exception of the 300 APC's) , as a matter of policy, not been able to either add to ~~xxxxx~~ or up-grade any major categories of weapons here for a period of something over eight years.

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